OUR VERY BIG FISH POND.

Castle Garden Aquarium to Be Ready July 4.

AN INTERESTING PUBLIC PROJECT.

Alterations Under Way and a New Scheme to Show the Fish to Good Advantage.

It will be good news for New Yorkers to learn that at last there is a good prospect for the opening of the Castle Garden Fish Aquarium this year. Mismanagement, bad work by public contractors and the change in the Board of Park Commissioners have postponed this result for four or five years, but if Architect Edward D. Lindsey's present calculations do not go astray the city's finny curiosities will be on public exhibition within four months. In fact, Mr. Lindsey is planning to throw open the building on July 4, if the work of renovation can be completed by that time.

When the present Park Board took office a sweeping change was decided upon in Castle Garden, and Mr. Lindsey was appointed consulting architect for this work. Dr. Bean was already in charge of the fish and their accommodations, and together these experts have planned an entire renovation of the interior of the buildings. Mr. Lindsey's plan for the alterations has just been accepted by the Park Commissioners, and the work will begin within a week or so. He has received permission from the Board to have the work done without public bidding, which would delay it for nearly two months, and most of the contracts are already signed.

This new design will very materially alter the interior of the old Garden. The chief fault of the old arrangement was that the great flood of light which streamed in from the skylights and windows in the centre of the building reflected against the glass fronts of the side-tanks and made the water a dense green, making it almost impossible to see the fish inside. Experts agree that the proper way to show fish behind glass is to have all the light come from the opposite side of the tank. This makes the water much more transparent, and the fish are, therefore, easily seen in the light green liquid. There are already lights behind the aquarium tanks, but the greater power of the light in front destroys their effect.

Mr. Lindsey's plan, which is said to be quite original with him, is to arch over sides of the main floor, forming vault-corridors around the tanks, so that the central light is almost entirely shut out from the sides of the building, and one sees the fish clearly in the strong light from the opposite side of the tanks. The stone pools in the centre of the building will be well lighted from the circle of arched skylights in the dome, which will admit a flood of light directly over them. The corridors will be decorated to give a submarine effect.

The circle of wooden pillars which have supported the roof for fifty years will be incased in larger iron pillars, with a second series of apparent columns will support the vaulted ceilings at the sides and divide the corridors from the central part of the aquarium. This false structure of steel will be covered with plaster and stucco work of ornamental design, and the surface will be tinted to look like limestone. The design of the interior will be of the Romanesque order, and the columns will have ornamental capitals of fine stucco work.

Within the great central dome and in the wide frieze under the skylights there will be allegorical decorations in fresco of water nymphs, of Neptune and other appropriate subjects symbolic of the sea. It is expected that the Municipal Art Society will make this decoration. A year or so ago this organization was anxious to decorate all the municipal buildings, and the Park Board has suggested to them that they might decorate the new aquarium. Although no definite arrangements as yet have been made for this, the Art Society people seemed to favor the suggestion. After the plaster has dried out and the new part of the structure has thoroughly settled, they will probably decorate these parts of the building. It will be nearly a year, though, before it would be safe to decorate the new plaster.

The work of rebuilding all the side tanks is about to be started, and Dr. Bean feels confident that it will be completed by July. After Professor Woodman was superseded by Dr. Bean as superintendent of the aquarium, it was decided to rebuild the side tanks entirely. Not only did the glass fronts crack, but they leaked around the edges, and it was thought less expensive to rebuild them entirely than to patch them up. One-inch glass was used in the fronts, and this was set directly against the brick and iron casings, with only cement to keep them from leaking. Dr. Bean will reduce the height of the tanks materially, so that the glass will be strong enough to retain the great body of water, and he will reset all the glass in wooden frames.

This work on the tanks will cost between $12,000 and $15,000, while that planned by Mr. Lindsey is estimated to cost about $20,000. Of the original appropriations of $300,000, there still remain about $40,000, and this is said to be enough to complete all the alterations necessary before the exhibit can be opened in July. The amount set aside for the maintenance of the aquarium, however, is said to be very meagre. A larger appropriation will be asked for next year, and the Commissioners have some unexpended balances in other funds which may be applied to the aquarium shortage this year.

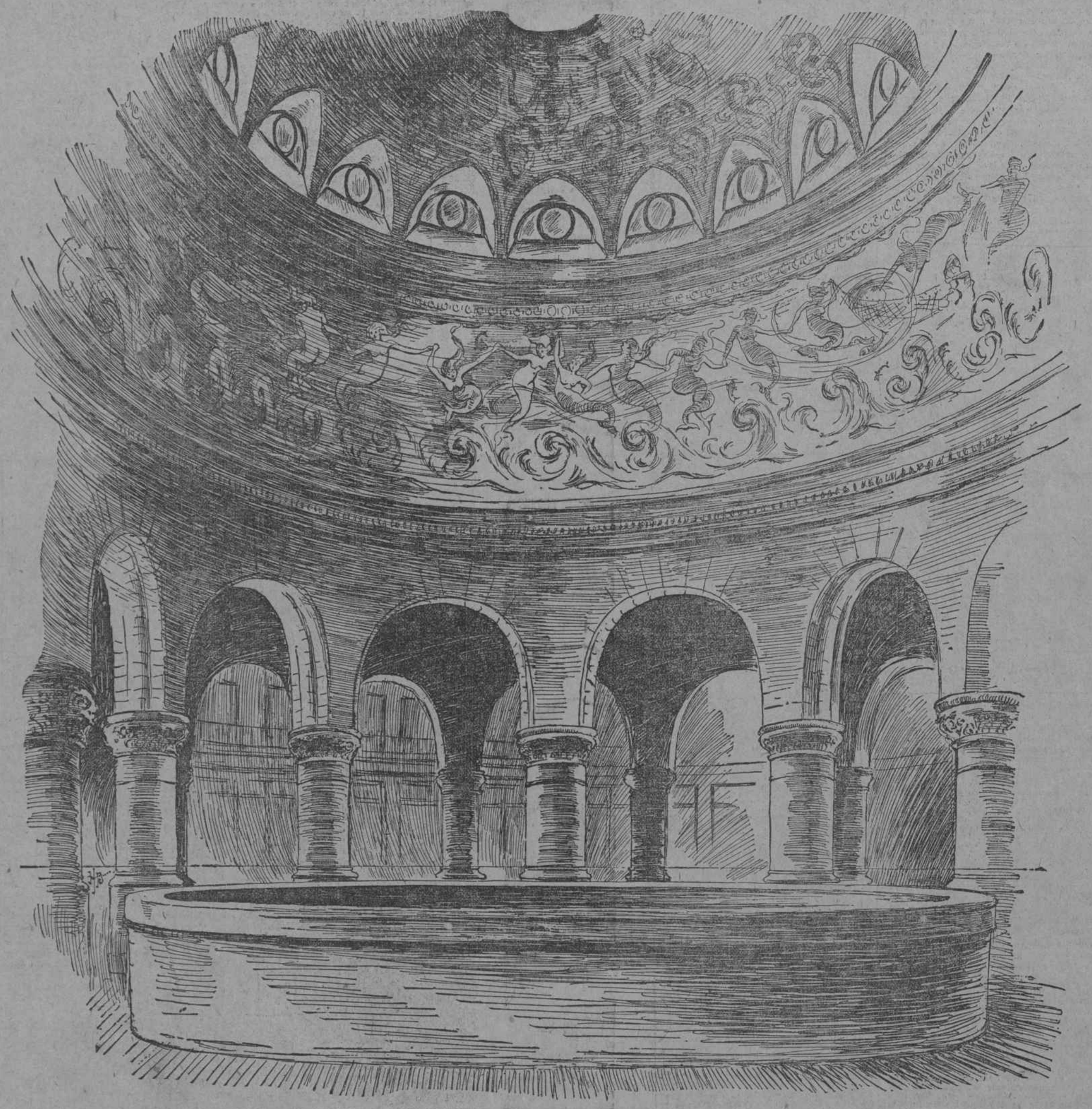
It has been definitely decided that there will be no provision for lighting the Garden at night, and the exhibit will not then be open to visitors. The experts say that night exhibits are dangerous to the fish.

The aquarium will be open six days in the week. Dr. Bean thinks it ought to be open on Sundays for the benefit of those who cannot go there on week days. He favors closing the exhibition on one of the week days, so that it may be open on Sundays. He says that one closed day is necessary to give the fish a rest and to clean the building each week.

As soon as the mild weather sets in the work of stocking up the tanks and pools will begin. The aquarium will send out several expeditions, it is expected, to Florida and other waters that abound in strange fish, while the local fishermen will be asked to bring in all their strange catches for the aquarium tanks.

Both the United States Government and the State Fish Commissions have offered specimens of the many varieties they propagate, and they will both probably be called on for contributions to the new exhibit when the tanks are in good condition to receive the fish. Unless the funds for the proper growth of the aquarium fall short, Dr. Bean is confident that he will have the finest fish exhibits in the world within two or three years.

The New Remodelled Castle Garden Aquarium.



A NORSELESS SLEIGH.

It Is the Work of a Brooklynite, and a Success.

IMPELLED BY A GAS ENGINE.

Goes at High Speed, but Its Headlight and Machinery Wreck Romance.

A horseless sleigh has been patented. It was thought when the electric wagon become an acknowledged success equine limitations would remain fixed for a time, at least. Fate, however, through a Brooklyn man, has willed otherwise.

The invention was originated by Reuben H. Plass, who has constructed a sleigh that can jingle bells and glide over a snowy road at as good a pace as any one could ask. Several trial trips have been made and all have been successful.

This will be sad news for the Winter Girl. How she will rebel at the thought of going for a ride when the motor power of the sleigh is a gas engine, liable to blow up with horrid results should her escort pay too much attention to her and too little to the cranks and levers! The fact that the driver will have to use both his hands to control the machine will be enough to condemn the whole thing in her eyes, at least, not to mention the headlight that interferes with the moonlight which every one associates with sleigh rides.

This new-fashioned sleigh is a combination of the old sleigh, with the addition of gasoline tanks, compressed-air cylinders, electric batteries and wheels and cranks without number. There are tool boxes and water tanks concealed within its pleasant exterior. The technical description of Mr. Plass's invention reads like a chapter from an advanced treatise in mechanical and electrical engineering, viz:

A broad wheel in the centre and underneath the body of the sleigh is the main propeller. This wheel is keyed to a shaft mounted in boxes, which are arranged in guides connected to the body of the sleigh. The boxes are capable of sliding in the guide, and are held in the lower ends of the same like coil springs, unless the propelling wheels comes in contact with an obstacle. The guides are curved so that any variation in the height of the shaft carrying the propelling wheel will not affect the driving mechanism. By this ingenious device, should the sleigh meet with any unexpected obstacle, it would be possible for the machine to overcome it. The inventor claims that his sleigh is built so strongly that it could make headway over rough ice and plough its way through drifted snow.

The power necessary to drive the sleigh is derived from a gas-engine arranged beneath the rear seat. It is the invention of the patentee of the sleigh and, it is claimed, meets all requirements for this and every kind of horseless road vehicle. It is provided with two cylinders, a central air-tight chamber arranged between the cylinders receiving the piston rods and having extended into the same the main shaft of the engine.

Each cylinder is connected with tanks containing naphtha and compressed air; the naphtha tank is also connected with a central chamber by a pipe. As in all gas-engines the force is obtained by the explosion of the gases generated by the heated naphtha.

The spark necessary to explode the charges in the cylinders is furnished by a dynamo or electric battery of any suitable kind. The poles of the batteries are connected with the wires on the valve rods and the binding posts on the end of each cylinder. Projecting inward from the binding post is a rod having a bent end, and mounted within each cylinder, adjacent to the rod, is a lever. As the valve is raised it comes in contact with the end of the lever. When the valve closes the lever is released and is forced into contact with the rod by means of a spring making a spark and thereby exploding the charge in the cylinder.

Novelty seekers who are looking for a ride at the first opportunity in the horseless sleigh will be pleased to learn that provision is made for a safety blow-off valve, and that a most efficient brake is provided by an arrangement of pulleys, pins and levers by which the power can be applied or discontinued as required.

The sleigh is, of course, mounted upon runners, and barring the wheel in the centre, which it is impossible entirely to conceal, and the fact that there appears to be an undue disproportion between the seats and the bulk of the vehicle, it is not unlike the ordinary "swell" turn-out of the parks.

A PENSIONERS' TOWN.

One-Fourth of the Population of Stoneham, Maine, Draws Money from Uncle Sam.

It would almost seem as if the most patriotic town in the United States is Stoneham, in Maine. Stoneham has hitherto been unknown to fame, but an examination of the pension rolls at Washington has disclosed the fact that one-fourth of the voters now living there are pensioners of the civil war. It has also been discovered that there were more enlistments from this town than there were voters living there during the progress of the war.

The Highest and the Lowest Bar-Rooms in the World.

Wherever civilization goes, the sale of alcoholic liquor goes with it. Not only in the remotest, but also in the most inaccessible portions of the earth do we now find facilities for alcoholic stimulation. Day by day the demon Rum gains new strongholds and ever he grows more daring.

This great and remarkable fact receives fresh illustration from the pictures which the Sunday Journal prints of the highest and lowest barrooms in the world. One of these barrooms, that at the bottom of the mine, is a new thing, and the majority of people will probably learn about it now for the first time. The other is a necessary attachment of a highly respectable institution, an observatory on Mont Blanc.

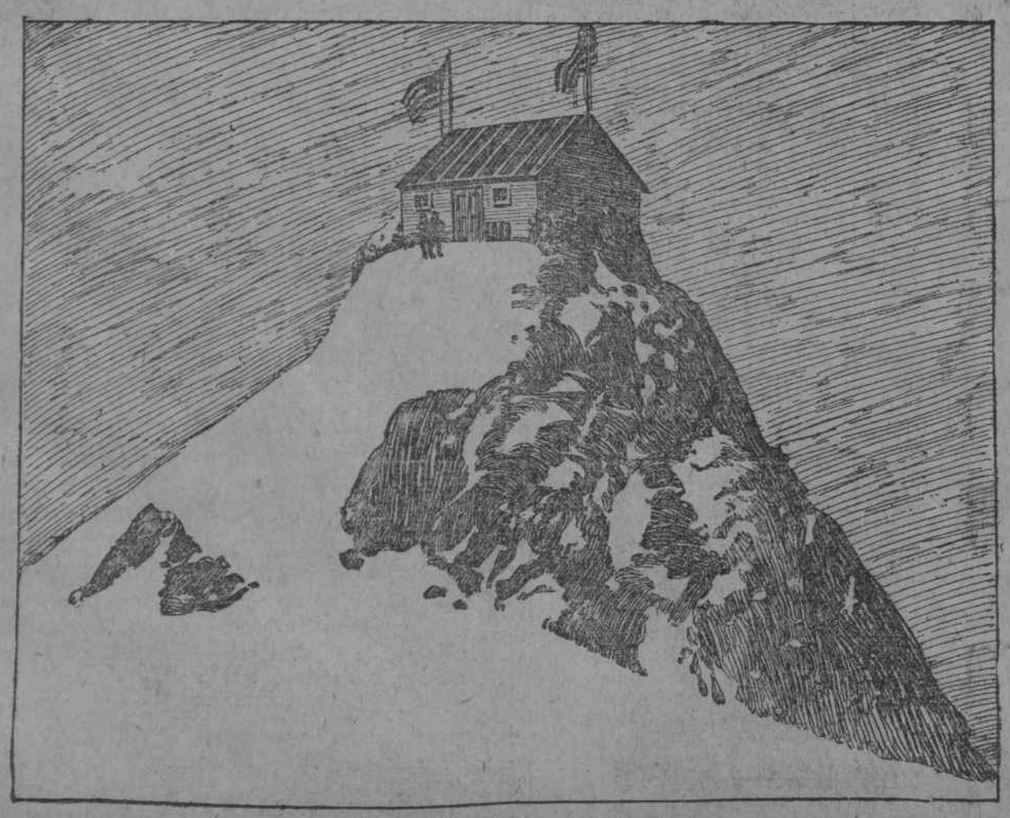
One barroom is 750 feet below the surface of the earth, in the Chantler Mine, St. Louis County, Minnesota. The Chantler is one of the numerous mines in the Vermillion range, a hard iron ore belt, and is about ninety miles from Duluth. The miners who work there are Finlanders and Hungarians, and extremely fond of alcohol. They all carry knives, with blades four inches long, which they draw frequently.

From time to time, miners were arrested for committing murderous assaults in the mines, and sent to Duluth for trial. They were in an advanced state of intoxication. The managers of the mines noticed that men who went down perfectly sober came up blind drunk. This could not be due to the influence of coal dust, but it was some time before the true cause was discovered.

At last a miner who was seriously injured in a fight confessed that one of the miners sold liquor to the others. A deputy sheriff was then sent to investigate. He was taken to the very lowest shaft, where he was told that the barroom, known in miners' language as a "blind pig," would be found.

Orna Mosjeckja, the barkeeper, being threatened with arrest, uncovered his bar. It consisted of a board, one end of which rested on a pile of ore and the other on an empty powder keg. His stock consisted of four quart bottles of raw alcohol, three quart bottles of very bad whiskey and three powder cans full of beer. It was said that he had made $3.50 a day from the sale of raw alcohol alone. He was held for trial at Duluth.

The other bar is a very different affair. It is in connection with the French Observatory, at the top of Mont Blanc, which is 15,770 feet high. There you can get the best French cognac and champagne. Everything is in striking contrast to the raw alcohol and the powder keg of the mine. They represent two extremes in two senses. A stimulant is a necessity for injured or wearied Alpine climbers.



At the Top of Mont Blanc.

The Bottom of a Minnesota Coal Mine.